

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

By the foregoing amendments, claim 1 has been amended and claim 12 has been added. Also, claims 6 and 10 have been slightly amended. These amendments are supported throughout the specification, and no new matter has been added. Thus, claims 1-12 are currently pending in the application and are subject to examination.

In the Office Action mailed September 15, 2004, the Examiner: (i) rejected claims 1-7, 10 and 11 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tatsuyuki, JP 4-292239; (ii) rejected claim 8 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Tatsuyuki in view of Bohn et al., US 6,595,549; and (iii) rejected claim 9 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Tatsuyuki.

Rejection of claims 1-7, 10 and 11 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tatsuyuki

The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as Tatsuyuki does not disclose or suggest “width constraining means attached to an inner middle area inside the left half airbag and right half airbag, respectively, for constraining lateral widths thereof when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated,” as recited by the claims. According to the recited structure, the width constraining means 70 within each half airbag 12, 14 constrain the lateral width of each respective half airbag when the airbag is deployed.¹ In contrast, the airbag of Tatsuyuki includes two bag bodies 2, 3 having their distal ends connected by a clothlike material 4.² Rather than connecting an inner middle area of each half airbag to restrict a lateral width of each respective half airbag, the clothlike material 4 of Tatsuyuki connects the outer distal ends of the bag bodies 2,3 and limits their ability to separate from each other. As such, the clothlike material 4 of the Tatsuyuki patent limits a distance between the bag bodies 2,3, but the walls or surfaces of each bag body 2, 3 are still free to expand laterally. Therefore, Tatsuyuki does not disclose or suggest a width constraining means attached to an inner middle area of each of a left half airbag and a right half airbag for constraining a lateral width of each half airbag when the half airbags are inflated. Thus, based on the above discussion, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-7, 10 and 11 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tatsuyuki.

¹ See, e.g., specification paragraphs 23 and 24, and Figs. 1(a) and 1(b).

² JP 4-292239, Abstract.

Rejection of claim 8 under 35 USC § 103(a)
as being obvious over Tatsuyuki in view of Bohn et al.

The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as Tatsuyuki and Bohn et al., in any combination, do not disclose or suggest “width constraining means attached to an inner middle area inside the left half airbag and right half airbag, respectively, for constraining lateral widths thereof when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated,” as recited by claim 1, from which claim 8 depends. As discussed in detail directly above, the Tatsuyuki patent discloses a clothlike material 4 that limits a distance between two bag bodies 2, 3, but does not disclose or suggest the recited width constraining means disposed within each bag body 2, 3 to constrain their respective lateral widths. The addition of Bohn et al. does not solve the deficiencies of Tatsuyuki. The gas bag 3 of Bohn et al. is “constructed in a ring shape,”³ rather than having the left and right half airbags. Further, Bohn et al. does not disclose or suggest the above-recited “width constraining means.” As such, the combination of Tatsuyuki and Bohn et al. does not disclose or suggest the structure recited in this claim. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claim 8 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Tatsuyuki in view of Bohn et al.

Rejection of claim 9 under 35 USC § 103(a)
as being obvious over Tatsuyuki

The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as Tatsuyuki does not disclose or suggest “width constraining means attached to an inner middle area inside the left half airbag and right half airbag, respectively, for constraining lateral widths thereof when the left half airbag and the right half airbag are inflated,” as recited by claim 1, from which claim 9 depends. As discussed in detail directly above, the Tatsuyuki patent discloses a clothlike material 4 that limits a distance between two bag bodies 2, 3, but does not disclose or suggest the recited width constraining means disposed within each bag body 2, 3 to constrain their respective lateral widths. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claim 9 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Tatsuyuki.

New Claim 12

³ US 6,595,549 to Bohn et al., col. 2, lines 37-38.


The Applicants have added new claim 12 to further recite patentable features of the invention. Support for this amendment may be found throughout the specification.⁴ No new matter has been added. None of the cited references disclose or suggest “a connecting portion connecting the left half airbag to the right half airbag at midsections thereof in a direction that the left half airbag and the right half airbag deploy, and a distance between a rear end of the deployed airbag and the connecting portion being in the range of about 30% to about 70% of a length from the rear end to a front end of the deployed airbag,” as recited by this claim.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

A one month extension of time is hereby requested. A credit card authorization form in the amount of \$120.00 is attached herewith for the two month extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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⁴ See, e.g., specification paragraph 31, and Fig. 1(b).